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INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS

United States Department of Agriculture

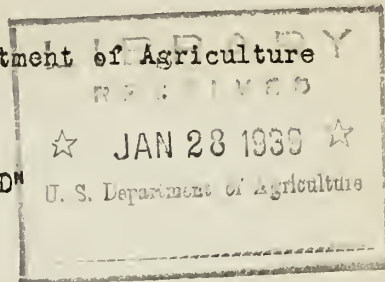
RELEASE FOR PUBLICATION
FEBRUARY 1, 1939 (WEDNESDAY)

WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE MARKET BASKET

by
Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

"INSPECTED AND PASSED"



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This year of 1939 is the 33d that the family marketer going to buy meat has seen on the wholesale cut on the butcher's block a little round purple stamp with the letters "U. S. INS'D & P'S'D." The little stamp has become so familiar that homemakers seldom stop to realize its significance -- the fact that for a third of a century a large part of America's meat supply has been "inspected and passed" by Federal experts to signify its wholesomeness, and its compliance with certain health standards.

In the year just closed the Federal Government supervised the slaughter of nearly 70 million food animals -- cattle, hogs, sheep, and goats -- in some 300 meat establishments in 252 cities and towns. This was about 2 out of every 3 of these animals killed for food throughout the nation, according to official estimates. In addition, there was inspection at about 400 meat processing plants that do not slaughter.

Federal meat inspection is required by law in every establishment that slaughters animals or processes meats and ships any part of its output across State lines. But there is no Federal supervision for farmers who slaughter their own animals on their own farms, nor for meat plants that sell all they produce "locally", that is, inside the boundaries of the same State. Several states and many cities have their own inspection systems, some of them patterned after the national model.

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Through 33 years the same little stamp has stood for exactly the same thing-- a clean and wholesome meat supply. But the methods of securing this "clean and wholesome" meat supply have changed to keep up with the times.

From the start a working place that was clean and easily kept clean, was regarded as one of the essentials. The Government inspects meat only in plants that meet the general standards specified by the Federal meat-inspection law and regulations. Sanitary engineers of the meat-inspection service have made a thorough study of suitable construction and equipment.

The requirements specify such necessities as generous quantities of hot water under pressure, plenty of well-located places to sterilize instruments, good drainage, efficient lighting, good ventilation, and adequate facilities for conducting inspection and disposing of condemned products. These requirements are being changed constantly to keep pace with new developments. The regulations provide that certain machinery move only so fast and no faster. This restriction on speed is necessary to give inspectors sufficient time to examine each carcass thoroughly as it passes before them.

Plumbing and lighting requirements change with scientific advances in both these lines. One of the newer developments is the use of glass building blocks -- allowing more light than in conventional structures and less glare through the daylight hours.

In the interest of greater cleanliness, stainless steel hooks, blades, and other equipment are gradually replacing the older types of equipment, all of which require constant polishing to keep down the rust.

Thoroughness is the motto for every step of the inspection service. Experienced graduate veterinarians supervise examinations from the time the live animals are checked over before the slaughter. Any animal that is affected with any disease or condition which might cause condemnation in whole or in part is tagged with the words "U. S. Suspect" and held for separate slaughtering.

At the time of and after the slaughter, qualified inspectors scrutinize all parts of the carcass and give special attention to parts in which disease is most likely to make its first appearance.

If there are any indications of disease or any objectionable conditions, the carcass is marked with a tag "U. S. Retained", and held for a more intensive study. In this, as in all examinations, the public gets the benefit of any doubt, and only meat that is "clean, wholesome, and fit for human food" wins the purple stamp of approval.

During the last four years only about four-tenths of 1 percent of the animals slaughtered in Federally inspected plants were condemned. This percentage, of course, does not include animals from which some of the parts were cut away and discarded because of minor ailments or injuries.

All condemned meat, parts as well as whole carcasses, are kept "under lock and key" until destroyed or made inedible.

Federal inspection of meats continues after the slaughter, through curing or processing, pickling or smoking, canning and processing, and even to the manner of shipping.

Everything that goes into canned or processed meat or meat food products -- or into cans of food made up partly of meat, such as scrapple or chili con carne with beans -- must be approved. The curing ingredients must be harmless; "smoke" must come from burning wood; spices must be pure; and all water used in the plant must pass a bacteriological test.

The meat-inspection service passes on labels as well as what goes into the package -- the design as well as the wording. Misleading statements and pictures, as well as false claims, are ruled out. The label must tell exactly what is in the can or package. "Pure pork," for instance, must be nothing else, and if sausage contains the cereal or dried milk permitted by law, the label must tell this plainly.

The use of the round purple stamp is confined to such products as sausages, fresh, frozen, and some cured meats. Sometimes the stamp design is burned into smoked meats. For products packed in boxes or in cans, the words of the stamp appear in full on the label "U. S. Inspected and Passed, by Department of Agriculture."

The purple stamping fluid used was chosen for its harmlessness, and this mark of wholesomeness may as well be left on the meat until serving time. But if you object to the looks of the purple circle shave it off carefully with a sharp knife. For if you slash through the fat into the lean below, the roast will not have the complete fat covering that cuts down cooking time and helps to hold in the juice.

Federal meat inspection, paid for by Government funds, costs only 1/25 of a cent a pound for the products inspected.

Poultry is also inspected for cleanliness and freedom from disease under the supervision of another branch of the Department of Agriculture, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. The service was established because poultry canners and dealers asked for it and were willing to pay the price. But no concern handling poultry is compelled by law to have any inspection of its birds or of its work.

Last year the poultry inspection service celebrated its tenth anniversary by putting its official stamp of approval on 43 million pounds of poultry. This was only a small percentage of the poultry slaughtered for food, though it represented a large part of the poultry that went into cans.

The stamp of approval of this service appears on labels as "Inspected and Certified by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS

United States Department of Agriculture

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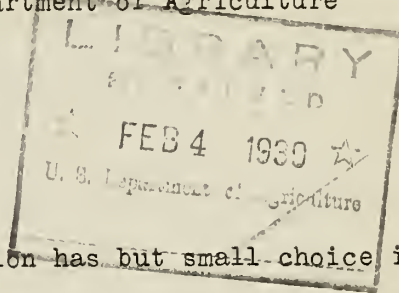
WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

DRIED FRUITS



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February is the time when most of the Nation has but small choice in fresh fruits, and these from far away warm regions; when the level of apples in family apple barrels is sinking; and there is a noticeable thinning out on the canned fruit shelves. It is the time when, for variety's sake, homemakers like best to turn to the nation's other fruit supply -- the dried fruits. For dried fruits do offer variety in a dozen forms, from the breakfast dish of prunes to the after-dinner date or fig confections.

Dried fruits are excellent foods. In minerals, especially iron, they outshine the corresponding fresh fruits weight for weight. Dried apricots are very rich in iron, and dates, figs, prunes and raisins also supply this essential mineral. Figs are a good source of calcium.

The dried fruits are also rich in certain vitamins. Prunes are an excellent source of vitamin A, and also supply riboflavin (vitamin G). Dates furnish both vitamin A and thiamin (vitamin B). Dried apricots and yellow peaches retain part of their original rich store of vitamin A; and figs supply thiamin and riboflavin.

It makes for good dietetics as well as good eating to squeeze some lemon juice over a dish of prunes for dried fruits lack the ascorbic acid (vitamin C) that makes fresh fruits so valuable in the diet. A daily supply of this vitamin is essential because it cannot be stored in the body.

Before the nineties, such dried fruits as the home market offered, were largely imported from Europe and the Near East. Now the United States leads the world in the production of raisins and prunes, and at least 90 percent of the figs we eat are home grown. In 1937, more than 7 million pounds of dates were grown in this country, and picked, processed, and packed according to our ideas of cleanliness and sanitation. The 1938 raisin "crop" established a new all-time record.

California has had its fig trees since the days of the early Spanish Missions, but commercial production came slowly. The name "Mission" suggests the origin of this variety. The Smyrna fig, so popular at the present time, did not put in its appearance until its own special insect was imported from the Mediterranean, for the Smyrna or Calimyrna fig will not mature unless pollinized by the caprifig wasp. Many varieties of figs are produced in quantity in nearly all southern states and as far north as southern Virginia.

A camel trip across the Sahara followed years of study and experimentation before the Department of Agriculture gave date growing its start in the United States. Large groves began to come into bearing in the early twenties and tonnage has increased rapidly since that time. But date production in this country still lags far behind our appetite for dates, as commercial date growing is still limited to a very few regions in California and Arizona. For only a small area can reproduce the unusual conditions found in a desert oasis -- and these the date seems to require -- a baking hot sun and rainless skies for the fruit, and plenty of water for the roots. And date trees in this country, like those in the Sahara and Arabia, must be pollinated by hand.

In California most fruits -- raisin-grapes, apricots, peaches, pears, dates and figs -- are dried on trays in the hot sunshine. But most prunes are dried in evaporators or dehydrating plants especially constructed for the purpose, just as

most fruits are dried in other sections of the country. In preparing dried fruit for the market it is dipped in hot water or exposed to steam. This makes for cleanliness and the fruits also win back a little of their original plumpness and softness.

Many of the light-colored fruits, apricots, peaches, pears, white figs, and some of the paler raisin-grapes are "sulfured" before drying, by being exposed to the fumes of burning sulfur. The gas formed helps to hold an attractive color in the fruit, and protects it against decay and against attack by insects during the drying process.

There is no evidence to prove that the small quantity of sulfur dioxide (not more than $1/5$ of 1 percent) that remains in the dried fruit is harmful to the human body. The practice of sulfuring dried fruits cannot be prohibited under the present Food and Drug Act, but they must be plainly labeled with the words "sulfur dioxide added" or some similar term. In cooking dried fruits, a part of the sulfur dioxide that may be left in them passes off into the air.

Quantities of these fruits are prepared without the use of sulfur for those who object to the "sharp" taste that many people notice in fruits so treated. If it is not plainly indicated on the label, no sulfur has been used. Sulfur is practically never used in drying prunes, dark raisins and figs.

A perfect dish of breakfast prunes, glistening and plump, with the rich flavor shared by both the fruit and the juice, is worthy of a cook's best effort. In her aim to restore some of the original tenderness and juiciness to the fruit, the homemaker will find it handy to know her prunes. So much moisture has been added to some prunes in packing them that they require only half an hour's soaking. Others are so dry that they must be soaked over-night before they take up enough water to make them plump. Some of the more moist prunes sold on the market are so tender they require no cooking at all, only brief soaking.

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Whether sugar is added depends partly on taste, partly on variety. In California very sweet plums are dried, while Oregon and Washington prunes are of the more tart Italian type. A bit of salt always will help "round out" the flavor.

Generally the most satisfactory procedure in cooking prunes is to wash them carefully in hot water, first, then drop them into boiling water and allow an hour for them to plump up. Next, simmer the prunes in the same water for half an hour, adding a little sugar, if desired, during the last few minutes of cooking. Always use the soaking water for cooking, to save every bit of the fruit flavor.

Prunes can be cooked to plumpness without soaking, but you lose flavor and waste fuel in the process. As for the other fruits, most dried apricots require no soaking, simply start the cooking in boiling water and simmer 30 minutes. For figs start the cooking in cold water and simmer 20 to 30 minutes to tenderness. Peaches are best if soaked in cold water for half an hour and cooked 15 to 20 minutes.

For variety add a slice of lemon or orange to prunes, or cook and serve apricots and prunes together. Prunes are excellent spiced and served with meat. For spiced prunes, simmer part of the time with a bag of whole spices -- allspice, cinnamon and cloves are good, and add a little vinegar during the last few minutes of cooking.

A delightful confection, "Apricot Scrolls", one that both children and dietitians approve, requires no cooking. To prepare wash 1/2 pound of dried apricots and soak them in 1/4 to 1/2 cup of warm water, depending on the dryness of the fruit. Stir frequently until the water is absorbed, and the fruit somewhat soft. Press the apricots through a colander or coarse sieve. Add a little salt to the pulp and then spread with a spatula into a thin sheet on wax paper. Make square corners if possible, and spread very thin.

Allow to stand overnight or until the pulp has dried, and can be removed from the paper without breaking. Lay the sheet of apricots on a layer of sugar and sprinkle a little sugar over the top. Roll if necessary, until the sheet is every even and very thin. Cut in squares and roll tightly, scroll fashion.

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WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

PLenty OF EGGS

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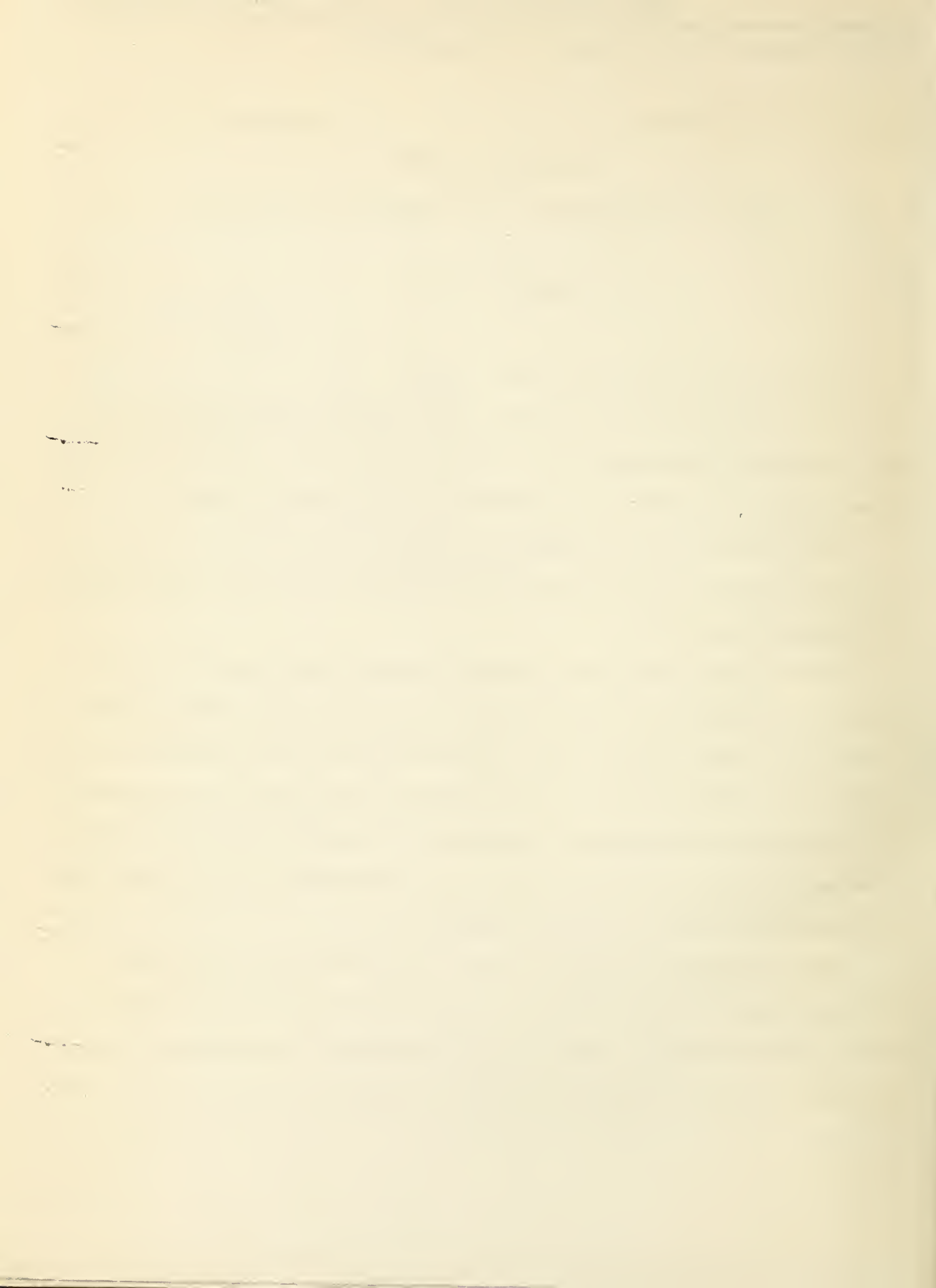
All signs point to plenty of eggs in 1939.

During the past few years, American hens have been laying more and more eggs. On January 1, they established a new all-time record -- more eggs per hen and more eggs per flock than on any January 1, since records were kept.

This year, there are more laying hens on farms than there were a year ago, and feed is plentiful and low in price. And the mild weather of the early winter has encouraged hens to lay.

The ill wind that blew on poultrymen in January, when wholesale egg prices continued to drop steadily through most of the month, was a good turn for those who buy eggs to use on the home table. For eggs are one of the so-called "protective" foods, that is, they are richer than most foods in some of the minerals and vitamins that the body needs. Since much of the mineral and vitamin content of the egg is concentrated in the yolk, it is not surprising that egg yolk is one of the first foods added to the baby's milk diet.

Eggs are especially valuable for their iron, vitamin A, and for their "efficient" protein. They are also rich in phosphorus and are a good source of calcium. Besides vitamin A, eggs have other outstanding vitamin values. They are an excellent source of riboflavin (vitamin G). Egg yolks are one of a comparative



few natural good sources of vitamin D. If the hens are fed a diet rich in vitamin D, the yolks of the eggs they lay also will be rich in this vitamin. Eggs can be counted upon to supply thiamin (vitamin B₁) and at least some of the "pellagra-preventing" factor in the diet.

Nutrition workers consider eggs one of the best foods to help promote growth in children and recommend that every child have 4 or 5 eggs every week, or better still one every day. Adults also find it to their advantage to eat at least 3 or 4 eggs every week. With eggs as plentiful as they promise to be this season, many more families can indulge in some of the foods they like especially well, such as omelets for breakfast, an occasional souffle for lunch or supper, and custards for dessert.

The protein of eggs helps them serve more purposes in cooking than any other food. Egg protein makes possible the lightness of angel food, and it helps to leaven other cakes. It thickens such foods as custards and hollandaise sauce. And it "stabilizes" mayonnaise dressing, that is, prevents the oil and lemon juice (or vinegar) from dividing into separate layers, as French dressing does when it stands. We dip croquettes into egg to keep them from soaking up too much of the hot fat. Sometimes we find egg whites handy to clarify coffee and soups. We add eggs to puddings and sauces to give them a richer flavor, and sometimes to give them color also.

Slow cooking at a low, moderate, even heat, is the secret of success for all egg dishes. Cooked slowly and until just done, the egg protein is tender, though firm. But high heat or overcooking causes the protein to shrink, and the eggs to become tough, or the egg dishes to separate and become watery.

So if you want to develop a new egg specialty, begin by learning the trick of keeping the heat slow and even. If it is omelet, use a thick pan over a low flame. If it is soft custard, use simmering rather than boiling water in the

lower part of the double boiler. For baked custards, set them in a pan of hot water and do not allow the oven temperature to go above moderate (about 350 degrees Fahrenheit). Egg white preparations, such as fruit whips and meringues, require an even lower, more steady heat, than whole egg mixtures.

For eggs as eggs, poach them in plenty of water below the boiling point; fry them in fat that is not too hot. And of course, when you cook eggs in the shell never "boil" them. Eggs cooked in the shell will be more evenly done to the very center if you start the cooking in cold water, and then bring it to a simmering temperature (185 degrees Fahrenheit).

And besides the general "slow and even" rule, specialists of the Bureau of Home Economics drop other helpful hints for preparing the different types of egg dishes.

A souffle may be a hearty main dish or a dessert, depending upon what other foods you add to the egg mixture. Add grated cheese, vegetable pulp, ground meat, or flaked fish, and you have an attractive dinner dish. Add chocolate, sugar, and vanilla, and it's dessert.

Souffles are "bound" with thick white sauce or bread crumbs, or both, but they hold up better when some bread crumbs are used. Good basic proportions for a four-egg souffle are about 1 cup of fine, but not too dry, bread crumbs, and 1-1/2 cups of milk.

For thick, velvety-smooth soft custard, stir "constantly and all over", and do not be tempted to turn up the flame. Then if your custard does not thicken well, look to your proportions. You may have too few eggs or too much sugar. For every quart of milk, use at least 4 good-sized eggs and no more than 6. Specialists suggest 6 to 8 tablespoons of sugar for every quart of milk.

To make a fluffy omelet more fluffy, use fresh eggs at room temperature. You will also have a little more foam if you add the salt to the egg whites as you

start to beat them. A "pinch" of cream of tartar, or 1/2 teaspoon of lemon juice added to the whites when the beating is well along^{will} also help hold up the "fluff", just as they do in angel cake making. Measure quantities and use one tablespoon of liquid to each egg. A four- to six-egg omelet is a good size for easy handling and cooking.

Omelets are in high favor with the adventurous cook, who can vary the recipe to suit her fancy, or make a pleasing background for left-over foods. You may like to add finely chopped ham or bacon to your omelet. Chopped cooked vegetables, such as carrots, string beans, or broccoli, will give color as well as variety. Many like to spread the omelet with jelly or pour jelly or jam over the top. Others use a bit of fresh omelet herbs such as chives, basil, marjoram or thyme, or a generous pinch of dried herbs for seasoning.

Fruit juices or vegetable juices may be used in place of milk. Tomato juice is an especially happy choice, as its acid helps hold up the egg foam and makes it more tender; and the red of the tomato gives the whole omelet a pleasing pink cast.

For an omelet with more body, add medium white sauce, using 1/2 to 3/4 cup for a six-egg omelet. Peanut butter adds a distinctive rich flavor, as well as "body" to omelets. Use 1 tablespoon of nut butter for each egg, and blend it thoroughly with the egg yolks before you fold the mixture into the beaten whites.

An unusual vegetable omelet is prepared according to the Chinese idea, using shredded raw vegetables such as onion, green pepper, and celery or bean sprouts. The raw vegetables will be quick cooked, oriental fashion, in the omelet. Use about 1/2 cup of mixed raw vegetables to each egg.

INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS

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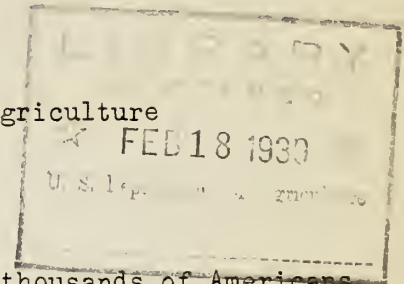
WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

- - -
ARE AMERICAN FAMILIES WELL FED?
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Despite the country's abundant food supplies, many thousands of Americans are still not what nutritionists call well fed. Some of them are too poor to pay the cost of suitable food. Others fail to realize that the combinations of the foods they eat may make all the difference between abounding vitality and mere passable good health.

The Bureau of Home Economics has just completed an extensive study of the diets of families of city workers, in which Dr. Hazel K. Stiebeling and her co-workers analyzed 4,000 weekly food records, gathered in 43 cities in 8 regions of the country during 1934-37.

This diet study is a vital part of the great national movement to conserve the country's resources--this time its human resources. It is a movement to prevent "human erosion", to use Doctor Stiebeling's words.

Measured against present day standards of good nutrition, the diets of fully half of these families--40 to 60 percent--were found to be in need of improvement.

Many of these not-so-good diets were satisfactory except in one or two respects. But, of course, most of the really poor diets failed to meet the needs of the body in several ways. Sometimes there was not enough food of any kind.

Among the diet faults, there was a striking need for more calcium and more vitamin A. Often a family's food selections did not give them a liberal allowance of the other vitamins and minerals.

Fewer than half of all these families chose foods that would give them what nutritionists call a "safe allowance" of calcium, necessary for the building of bones and teeth and some of the body processes.

A surprisingly large number of all the families, nearly 4 out of 5, did not receive the generous allowances of vitamin A now recommended. Only about one third of the families got enough vitamin A to fully protect them against what is known as nutritional "night blindness" -- the failure of the eyes to adjust quickly from bright to dim light, or vice versa.

Although there are many inexpensive sources of vitamin B₁ (thiamin), only about half of these families selected foods that would give them a liberal allowance of this vitamin.

And as for vitamin C (ascorbic acid), probably half of the families went without the daily allowance that nutritionists recommend. Ascorbic acid is the vitamin that is so often destroyed in cooking, and must be supplied daily because it cannot be stored in the body.

Only about half the families could be sure of plenty of iron from the foods they selected. The diets of 1 out of every 4 families were plainly short in this mineral which is essential to the work of the red blood cells.

Families with only very small sums to spend bought largely of foods that satisfy hunger at low cost. Their diets were one-sided and rated as "poor" in the studies. Those that spent more money for food had a better chance for well-balanced fare, for most of them bought more milk, eggs, vegetables and fruits, than the very poor families.

But plenty of money for food did not always mean good diets, and small expenditures did not always mean poor diets. Some homemakers managed to serve their families excellent meals, from the standpoint of nutrition, at very low

cost. Others spent more, but made poor selections. Out of every 10 families spending enough to get completely satisfactory diets, only 2 to 4 made really wise selections.

Two easy-to-follow rules for securing a diet adequate in all respects are advocated by nutrition specialists.

The first, proposed by Dr. H. C. Sherman of Columbia University, tells how to apportion the food dollar: "Spend as much for milk and cheese, and as much for fruit and vegetables, as you do for eggs, lean meat, poultry and fish."

The second, proposed by the Bureau of Home Economics in "Diets to Fit the Family Income", gives details for the use of the different types of foods in moderate cost diets:

Milk: Allow one quart daily for each child, 1 pint for each adult. (This includes fluid, dried, or evaporated milk used in cooking. Milk may also be in the form of cheese or ice cream.)

Vegetables and fruits: At least 4 or 5 servings per person daily. Every day, at least one serving of each of the following, potatoes or sweet potatoes; tomatoes or citrus fruits, leafy, green, or yellow vegetables; and fruit.

Eggs: At least 2 or 3 a week for adults, at least 4 or 5 for young children, some in cooking.

Meat, fish or poultry: Five times a week. Daily if desired.

Serve a cereal dish daily, and bread and butter at every meal.

In this plan, the most common diet faults are carefully guarded against.

First calcium. Calcium is provided in milk--milk of all kinds--and cheese. Skim milk is at least as rich in calcium as whole milk; and milk does not lose its calcium when it is dried, evaporated, condensed, or made into cheese. Leafy green vegetables may meet much of the body's need for calcium if they are served frequently and eaten in generous quantities.

The plan keeps the need for vitamin A in mind from beginning to end. A daily serving of leafy, green, or yellow vegetables provides this vitamin in its least expensive form. Such vegetables as carrots and sweetpotatoes, and leafy greens as kale, spinach and turnip tops, are excellent choices. Milk--that is whole milk--butter, egg yolks, and tomatoes also furnish vitamin A.

Ascorbic acid (vitamin C) is provided in the daily serving of tomatoes or citrus fruits. These foods are especially good, partly because their acid helps protect the vitamin, but nearly all the fresh fruits and vegetables we eat furnish ascorbic acid. "Eat some raw fruits or vegetables every day", is a good slogan, for vitamin C may be destroyed in cooking, and the body cannot store a supply.

To be sure of a generous supply of vitamin B₁ (thiamin) choose whole grain cereals and other foods that are not highly refined, and serve dried beans and peas often. Pork muscle and chicken and certain vital organs are rich sources of thiamin, and most of the "natural" foods such as milk, fruits and vegetables furnish some.

Leafy and green vegetables and whole grain cereals are inexpensive sources of iron. Egg yolks are rich in this mineral, and some of the other good food sources are liver and dried fruits.

